

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 000856 TOSEC 130144

NODIS

FOL RPT MOSCOW 0005 ACTION SECSTATE 2 JAN 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0005

NODIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST, AMBASSADOR SHULMAN AND
AMBASSADOR TOON

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDIP, UR, US

SUBJECT: MFA DECLARES DONALD KURSCH PERSONA NON GRATA

1. OLEG SOKOLOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF MFA'S USA DIVISION CALLED IN
POLCOUNSELOR AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 2 ON "URGENT" BUSINESS.
APOLOGIZING FOR FACT THAT THIS WAS DONE ON AN AMERICAN HOLIDAY,
SOKOLOV HANDED POLCOUNSELOR NOTE, INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF WHICH
FOLLOWS:

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BEGIN TEXT: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE USSR HAS BEEN
AUTHORIZED TO STATE THAT COMPETENT SOVIET AUTHORITIES POSSESS
INFORMATION THAT FIRST SECRETARY OF THE US COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN
MOSCOW DONALD KURSCH, WHILE UTILIZING HIS OFFICIAL POSITION,
IS ENGAGED, BOTH IN MOSCOW AND IN VISITS TO OTHER SOVIET CITIES, IN
OBTAINING INFORMATION OF A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE
CHARACTER WHICH COMPRISES A STATE SECRET, AND HE ATTEMPTS TO

INSTILL IN INDIVIDUAL SOVIET CITIZENS A SPIRIT OF HOSTILITY
TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION.

SUCH ACTIVITY BY KURSCH IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS DIPLOMATIC
STATUS AND HARMS THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN
OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE ABOVE, THE MFA OF THE USSR DECLARES
DONALD KURSCH PERSONA NON GRATA AND DEMANDS THAT AMERICAN
AUTHORITIES TAKE NECESSARY MEASURES TO CEASE THE UTILIZATION
BY AMERICAN DIPLOMATS OF THEIR STAY IN THE SOVIET UNION FOR
PURPOSES INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR OFFICIAL STATUS.
MOSJCOW, JANUARY 2, 1978. END TEXT.

3. EXPRESSING SURPRISE, POLCOUNSELOR SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY
NOTIFY HIS SUPERIORS. POLCOUNSELOR CHARACTERIZED THE ASSERTIONS
CONTAINED IN THE NOTE AS TOTALLY UNFOUNDED AND WITHOUT BASIS
AND STATED THAT THIS MOVE BY THE SOVIET SIDE WAS COMPLETELY
UNWARRENTED. SOKOLOV SAID HE COULD ONLY REPEAT THE CONTENTS OF
THE NOTE.

4. AFTER REPEATING HIS EARLIER OBSERVATIONS, POLCOUNSELOR ASKED
A PERSONAL QUESTION: WHAT TIME FRAME DID THE SOVIET SIDE ATTACH
TO THE "CONTEMPLATED ACTION" (KURSCH'S DEPARTURE)? SOKOLOV SAID
THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC TIME FRAME BUT THAT IN SUCH CASES THE
SOVIETS WOULD EXPECT THE US SIDE TO RESPOND WITH APPROPRIATE
SPEED.

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5. COMMENT: SINCE THERE IS NO PARTICLE OF TRUTH IN ALLEGATIONS
MADE AGAINST KURSCH, THIS MOVE IS A TRANSPARENT RETALIATION FOR THE
RECENT PNG ACTION AGAINST A SOVIET COMMERCIAL OFFICER IN WASHINGTON.
ALTHOUGH THE CIRCUMSTANCES DIFFER IN SOME RESPECTS, IT IS
DISTURBINGLY REMINISCENT OF THE 1976 RETALIATORY PNG AGAINST
POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARSHALL BREMENT. WE FEEL STRONGLY THAT
THIS ACTION CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO STAND WITHOUT RETALIATION ON
OUR PART, AND THAT THE LATTER MUST BE SUFFICIENTLY PAINFUL TO
THE SOVIETS, THAT--IF THE INTENTION IS COMMUNICATED IN ADVANCE--
THE SOVIETS MIGHT SEE THE WISDOM IN WITHDRAWING THEIR
ACTION AGAINST KURSCH.

6. THE EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS WILL OF COURSE BE DETERMINED
BY AMBASSADOR TOON, WHO IS NOW IN WASHINGTON. CHARGE WILL
COMMUNICATE HIS THOUGHTS TO AMBASSADOR TOON BY SEPARATE MESSAGE.
MEANWHILE, TO PRESERVE MAXIMUM FREEDOM OF ACTION AND TO AVOID THE
PRESSURES OF PREMATURE PUBLICITY, KNOWLEDGE OF THIS SOVIET MESSAGE
IS BEING CLOSELY HELD WITHIN THE EMBASSY. KURSCH AND HIS SUPERIOR,
E/C COUNSELOR SKOUG, MUST OF COURSE BE INFORMED. HOWEVER, WE SEE
NO REASON TO MOVE PRECIPITOUSLY IN ARRANGING KURSCH'S DEPARTURE.
THE ABSENCE OF A DEADLINE WOULD IMPLY THAT HE HAS AT LEAST A WEEK
TO TEN DAYS TO DEPART IF THE SOVIETS CANNOT BE

PERSUADED OR FORCED TO WITHDRAW THEIR DEMAND.

7. FOR THESE REASONS, UNLESS WE RECEIVE CONTRARY INSTRUCTIONS, WE SHALL INFORM KURSCH OF THE NOTE, TELL HIM THAT EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO OBTAIN A REVERSAL, AND THAT IN THE INTEREST OF A SUCCESSFUL EFFORT, WORD SHOULD NOT BE SPREAD AT THIS POINT BEYOND ADVISING HIS WIFE. HE MUST OF COURSE UNDERSTAND THAT IF OUR EFFORTS FAIL, HE MAY BE REQUIRED TO LEAVE DURING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 9.

MATLOCK

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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